May 23-26 | Holland, MI

The 2016 Summer Institute on Theology and Disability

Our Vision and Future

**Vision**

The vision of the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability is to expand the depth and breadth of theological inquiry and resources that address and include the gifts, needs, and contributions of people with disabilities and their families to theological learning and religious practice.

The Summer Institute works toward that vision by:

* Sponsoring a week long intensive institute that brings together leading scholars and writers in the areas of theology and disability with clergy, religious leaders, practitioners, laity and others who are interested and involved in inclusive ministries and faith supports.
* Affirming and exploring the ways that disability impacts all of the major theological disciplines as well as the many dimensions of religious life and faith community practices.
* Recognizing and celebrating the ways that the integration of theology and practice mutually inform and support one another. For example, we believe that theological research and reflection can provide opportunities for faith based service organizations to become more reflective about the development of practices based on their vision and mission. Likewise, in reverse, the Summer Institute provides an opportunity for people with disabilities, families, and faith based providers to contribute to the conversation as well as receive, and to help shape both theological and social research that can inform practice.
* Appreciating the diversity of perspectives that come from scholars, practitioners, and people with disabilities and their families from a wide range of religious traditions and from a wide array of experiences with disability. The Institute aspires to be a “big tent,” where everyone can speak from their particular background and experience while also respecting the same in others. We meet one another in an I-Thou framework that hopefully supports personal sharing, careful listening, and mutual learning.
* Building a national/international event that is recognized for those contributions while also making the key resources from the Summer Institutes available and accessible to everyone interested.

**The Future**

Living out this Vision depends on the core planning team and faculty, the institutions who have invited the Summer Institute to their community, the sponsors who provide crucial financial and in-kind support, and the people who accept the invitation to come. Our future will depend on each one of these groups and upon the growing Summer Institute “community” to help us recruit both host institutions and sponsors. Our long term goal is to maintain reasonable registration costs and expenses while also building a financial foundation that can sustain the Summer Institute. We invite everyone to help.